

WYCOMBE WANDERERS need to win their last two matches of the season — at home to Bishop's Stortford and Dagenham — to have a chance of taking their fourth Isthmian League title in five years. That's the task facing them after Saturday's exciting 1-1 draw at Tooting and Mitcham.

The situation at the top just couldn't be closer. Enfield have one game left at home to Dagenham on Thursday. If they win they will finish with 95 points. Wanderers have two games left — at home to Bishop's Stortford tonight (Tuesday) and home to Dagenham on Saturday. If they win both, they'll also have 95 points. If both Enfield and Wycombe beat Dagenham, the Essex club will be out of the running.

At the moment, Wycombe have just the better goal average — by .006 of a goal, in fact. If Enfield beat Dagenham that will be changed, of course, and it will be up to Wycombe to score a certain number of goals against Dagenham. The situation will be a good deal clearer after Thursday's game at Southbury Road.

Dagenham have the toughest task of the three clubs. They must win at Enfield, Wycombe and Tooting to take the title and if they can do that, few will deny they deserve it. But clearly, goal average could play a vital role in deciding the champions.

For Wycombe fans who didn't make the journey to Sandy Lane on Saturday, the 1-1 scoreline must have been a little disappointing. But considering the conditions, this was a fair result for the Blues who were made to fight all the way by a Tooting side that has lost only two games in 1975. They are a very strong and physical side and extremely difficult to beat on their own ground.

Their defence was extremely strong with the massive Steve Grubb dominating events at centre half. In midfield they had the former Brighton player Ron Howell who sprayed the ball around well. Their only weakness was up front and had they taken their chances, there's not much doubt they would have taken the three points.

With Terry Reardon ruled out due to a leg injury, manager Brian Lee gambled on switching Paul Birdseye from right back into midfield. Dave Bullock wore the number two shirt. Bullock's height and aggression certainly bolstered the defence but Birdseye struggled in the middle where no one was allowed a moment's time or an inch

## Wyc Wanderers 1, Tooting and M. 1

Report by  
**STUART EARP**

of space. Up front, Wanderers reverted to their established front three — Horseman, Searle, Perrin — with Dylan Evans as substitute.

The pitch at Tooting has never been one of the league's best and after a long season it was almost devoid of grass in the middle. Consequently the ball bounced twice as high as normal and was difficult to play on the ground.

Wanderers began well. Spurred on by four coaches of supporters, they used the ball intelligently with Searle going close after two minutes. At the other end Gary Hand cleared a dangerous situation in the box to set up another Wycombe attack. Howard Kennedy, who worked hard for 90 minutes, was well off-target with his long range shooting, sending two efforts high over the bar in the first 15 minutes.

It was Kennedy, however, who tested goalkeeper John Dunn after 31 minutes when his bouncing shot seemed to surprise the 'keeper, who had to palm the ball away at the last minute.

The best chance of the first half fell to Tooting. After 39 minutes, a long ball from Bobby Green found Nick Glover, who beat Hand's lunging tackle and ran into the box. John Maskell came out to narrow the angle and did well to parry Glover's powerful drive. Birdseye thumped the loose ball over his own net for a corner.

If the first half had lacked incident, the second certainly made up for it. Ex-Cambridge United defender Vic Akers drove a well worked free kick into the side netting and then Glover found himself with enough time to turn and shoot but Hand dived into block the effort. Both these chances were created by slack marking with Wycombe's defence in quite a muddle early in the half. After

54 minutes Vic Cogger blazed another chance at the far post over the bar before Dave Juneman replaced the injured Glover.

After that early pressure, Wycombe managed to pull themselves together and create chances for themselves. Alan Phillips almost got his head to a free kick in the six yard box and then Searle nodded wide at the near post. Minutes later, Tony Horseman bent in a free kick and after a series of headers Perrin saw his effort saved by Dunn.

With 69 minutes gone, Evans replaced Perrin. As Horseman was tiring, it seemed he was the obvious man to go off. That theory was shattered just one minute later. Evans, with almost his first touch, controlled a long ball in midfield. Cutting inside, he spotted Horseman running into a good position and threaded a pass through. Tooting, caught square, could do nothing as "Bodger" ran on and turned back a shot which bobbled past Dunn and just inside the far post.

The one goal looked to be enough. If Wycombe could hold out for the final quarter they would be home and dry. Unfortunately, their lead lasted just three minutes.

Tooting swarmed back into attack when Howell sent the ball through to Juneman. Bullock slipped as he went to challenge, giving the substitute the chance to turn and prepare for a shot with only Maskell to beat. While he did so, however, Phillips caught his ankle and sent him crashing to the ground. Referee Lewis could make only one decision and Howell drove the penalty just wide of Maskell, who almost got a hand to the kick.

After that, Wanderers had to withstand waves of Tooting attacks and for once, the defence looked jittery and unsteady. In the 82nd minute they almost conceded another penalty. Hand and Maskell both hesitated as the ball came through and Maskell appeared to push Trevor Ford. The referee, getting no assistance from his linesman, decided to award an indirect free kick which Phillips managed to block from Tony Amos, the ex-Wycombe forward.

Wanderers held out for the last few minutes after that and at the close, seemed content with just the one point after one of their toughest games for a long time.

**TOOTING:** J. Dunn; A. Berreclough, V. Akers, S. Grubb, R. Green, C. Gedney, R. Howell, A. Amos, T. Ford, V. Cogger, N. Glover (sub. D. Juneman 56 mins.).  
**WYCOMBE:** J. Maskell; D. Bullock, K. Mead, A. Phillips, G. Hand; H. Kennedy, P. Birdseye, M. Hollifield; A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin (sub. D. Evans, 69 mins.).

**Referee:** R. Lewis (Gt. Bookham).  
**Half time:** 0-0. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Horseman (70), Tooting — Howell pen. (73).